Amendments to the Claims

1.-32. (canceled)

33. (Previously Presented) A method for forwarding at least one signaling message with a network access unit of a third network, the at least one signaling message being from an originating unit in a first network, the at least one signaling message being intended for a destination unit in a second network, the originating unit supporting a first signaling protocol and the destination unit supporting a second signaling protocol, the third network connecting the first network to the second network, the method comprising:

transmitting a signaling message from the originating unit to the network access unit by tunneling via the third network, the signaling message comprising destination datum identifying the destination unit;

determining that the signaling message is intended for the destination unit via the network access unit assessing the destination datum;

converting the signaling message into the second signaling protocol if the second signaling protocol is different from the first signaling protocol and transmitting the converted signaling message such that the converted signaling message is sent to the destination unit; and

forwarding the signaling message without converting the signaling message to another signaling protocol if the first and second signaling protocols are identical.

34. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 33 wherein the network access unit converts the signal message into the second signaling protocol.

35. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 33 wherein the network access unit provides functions of a telecommunication system that serves for switching connections for transmission of voice data in a private data communication network.

36. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 33 wherein the network access unit provides network access functions for central units of at least two local data communication networks with the central units each providing services for a plurality of terminal devices of a data communication network.

37. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 33 wherein the network access unit provides a network access function for terminal devices of at least one local data communication network.

38. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 33 wherein the first signaling protocol is an H.323 signaling protocol, a QSIG signaling protocol, an SIP signaling protocol, an SIP based signaling protocol, an H.323 based signaling protocol, or a QSIG based signaling protocol.

39. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 33 wherein the first and second signaling protocols are identical if they are both from a same protocol family.

40. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 33 wherein the destination datum is read by an access function.

41. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 33 further comprising determining the first signaling protocol of the signaling message and determining the second signaling protocol required by the destination unit that is related to or specified by the destination datum.

42. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 41 wherein the network access unit determines the first signaling protocol of the signaling message and determines the second signaling protocol required by the destination unit that is related to or specified by the destination datum.

43. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 33 further comprising the network access unit storing the signaling message in a storage unit.

44. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 33 wherein the signaling message relates to at least one of signaling for voice data transmission and additional service features related to transmitting voice data.

45. (Currently Amended) A network access device for a third <u>network, the network access device</u> ~~network configured~~ for transmitting a signaling message having a first signaling

protocol received from a first device in a first network to a second device in a second network comprising:

a protocol conversion device converting ~~configured to convert~~ the signaling message received from the first device to a converted signaling message having a second signaling protocol that is different from the first signaling protocol if the second device does not support the first signaling protocol, the network access device transmitting ~~configured to transmit~~ the converted signaling message to the second device.

46. (Previously Presented) The network access device of claim 45 wherein the converted signaling message and the signaling message have identical signaling targets.

47. (Currently Amended) The network access device of claim 46 further comprising a decision device connected to the protocol conversion device, the decision device ~~configured to determine~~ determining whether the signaling message requires conversion into the converted signaling message.

48. (Previously Presented) The network access device of claim 47 further comprising a telecommunication device functional unit connected to at least one of the decision device and the protocol conversion device.

49. (Currently Amended) The network access device of claim 48 wherein the network access device communicating ~~is configured to communicate~~ with the first device of a first

network and the second device of a second network such that the signaling message is forwarded to the second device without converting the signaling message if the first signaling protocol is supported by the second device.

50. (Previously Presented). The network device of claim 49 wherein the signaling message is converted to the converted signaling message prior to being able to be transmitted to the second device.

51. (Currently Amended) The network device of claim 46 wherein the network access device also stores ~~is also configured to store~~ the signaling message on a storage device.